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A

Thanksgiving Sermon
FOR THE
Victory at DETTINGEN.

(Price Sixpence.)

Thanksgiving Sermon



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S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D

In *Little-Wild-Street,*

The 17th of JULY, 1743.

Being the day appointed,

By their Excellencies the *Lords Justices,*

For returning thanks to

A L M I G H T Y G O D,

For the late glorious Victory obtained
by his Majesty at *DETTINGEN.*

Published at the request of the congregation.

By JOSEPH STENNETT.

L O N D O N:

Printed for AARON WARD, in *Little-Britain*;
and sold by H. WHITRIDGE, at the *Royal*
Exchange; and A. DODD, without *Temple-Bar.*
MDCCLIII.

SERMON

PREACHED

In Little Wild Street,

The 17th of July 1743.

Being the day appointed

By their Excellencies the Lord Bishops

For returning thanks to

ALMIGHTY GOD.



For the late glory obtained
by his Majesty's arms.

Published at the request of the congregation.

BY JOSEPH STENNIS.

LONDON.

Printed for Aaron Ward, in Little Britain,
and sold by H. Whittington, at the Royal
Exchange; and A. Dodd, without the Bar.
MDCCLXXXIII.



PSALM CXLIV. 9, 10, 11.

*I will sing a new song unto thee, O God:
upon a psaltery, and an instrument of
ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.
It is he that giveth salvation unto
kings: who delivereth David his ser-
vant from the hurtful sword. Rid
me, and deliver me from the hand of
strange children; whose mouth speak-
eth vanity, and their right hand is a
right hand of falsehood.*



IF we did not find the name of *the*
man after God's own heart prefix'd
to this psalm, we shou'd, from the
pious as well as martial spirit it
breaths, be tempted to think *David*
was the penman of it. It seems to have been
prepared for the service of the tabernacle, and
design'd to celebrate, in the sanctuary of the Lord,
some great victory, which, by the special favour
of heaven, *David* had obtain'd over the ene-
mies

mies of *Israel*, and in which his royal person had been expos'd to imminent danger, and had been very remarkably preserved.

He gives all the glory where it is all justly due, and records the praises of *the Lord of hosts*, in such exalted strains, as his spirit only cou'd inspire. And to his own thanksgivings, and those of his people, he adds the most suitable and lively petitions for the divine presence, and success in all his future engagements abroad in the field, and for all the blessings of peace and plenty on his people at home.

He begins the sacred song with his most humble acknowledgments, that all that valour, and military skill, which had render'd him so formidable to his enemies, and so much the admiration of his own troops, were not the products only of nature and of art, but the gifts of God himself, and the blessed effects of his divine favour and influence.

Blessed, says he, be *the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight* *. In which words, some think *David* especially refers to that first great military action, to which God was pleas'd to call him, when he was but a youth: an action, in which he had the honour of deciding the quarrel between the armies of *Israel* and the *Philistines*, in a single combat with the giant of *Gath*. But he goes on, — *Thou art my goodness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield, and he in whom I trust: who subdueth my people under*

* Psalm cxliv. 1.

for the Victory at Dettingen. 3

under me^b. As if he had said, " 'Tis true, in
" the course of the wars in which I have been
" engag'd, I have been often oblig'd to those
" fastnesses that nature has in some places pro-
" vided, and to those towers and bulwarks
" which have been erected by art; I have been
" often rescued from danger by the bravery
" of my troops, and have with frequent suc-
" cess, made use of weapons both of the of-
" fensive and defensive kind: but neither for-
" tifications nor armour, neither sword nor
" shield, neither the number nor courage of the
" forces under my command, nor my own va-
" lour and fortitude, and skill in the art of
" war cou'd have deliver'd me, and given me
" victory, if God had not been on my side: 'tis
" he that, by his special favour and goodness,
" has furnished me with these advantages; and
" when I have been deprived of any of them,
" he has often by the signal, and even miracu-
" lous interposition of his providence, deliver'd
" me out of the hands of my enemies, and
" made me to triumph over them.

" The great *Lord of hosts* has approved him-
" self to be *my God*, and has not only often
" made my foes abroad to fly and fall before
" me, but, while I have been successfully
" fighting for my country against foreign ene-
" mies, he has overcome the factious spirits of
" many of my own deluded subjects at home,
" *he has subdued my people under me.*"

B 2

David

^b Psalm cxliv. 2.

David had great opportunities of making the most just and useful observations upon human nature, and had, in his own circumstances, experienced much of the vicissitude of all things here below; so that to his lively thanksgivings, he with great propriety, adds the humble sense he had of his own personal weakness and unworthiness: and tho' he was, by the divine favour, at present seated in so high a station, and honour'd with so many peculiar advantages above other men, yet, whatever opinion any might entertain of his condition, David wou'd still remember that he was but a man; and LORD, says he, *what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him? or the son of man, that thou makest account of him? Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away*^c.

And this pious and humble acknowledgment, is succeeded with an earnest application for divine aid, against the future attempts of his enemies, in a sublimity of language, that has been but faintly copied by the greatest masters of poetry, among either the antient Greeks or Romans, or those of later times. *Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightnings, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them. Send thine hand from above, rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children: whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood*^d.

^c Psalm cxliv. 3, 4. ^d Ver. 5—8.

for the Victory at Dettingen. 5

Immediately after these words follow those which I first read to you, and in which I have to consider,

I. *David's resolution to praise God, and the manner in which he expresses it: I will sing a new song unto thee, O God, upon a psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.*

II. The argument of his thanksgiving on this occasion.

1. That all salvation and victory belongs to the Lord. It is he *that giveth salvation unto kings*; and,

2. That in the great dangers he himself passed thro' in the field, God had made him the object of his special care and preservation: *Who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.* And then,

III. His prayer for future deliverance and success. *Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children; whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*

Each of these I shall attempt a little to explain, and then proceed to make some improvement of the whole, with reference to the occasion of our solemn thanksgiving this day.

I. Then,

I. Then, we have *David's* resolution to praise God, and the manner in which he resolves to perform it. *I will sing a new song unto thee, O God, &c.*

In the remembrance of past favours of this sort, he will magnify the name of the LORD; and in the experience of any fresh salvation, he is determin'd to offer up his praises to him, to whom they will be always justly due. But,

1. We may here more particularly observe, that as *David* was very eminently qualified both for the sceptre and the sword, so he was inspired with the most extraordinary gifts from above, and with the impulse of the divine Spirit, to lead the praises of the sanctuary: he was the greatest prophet as well as the greatest prince and captain of his time, and was anointed to all these services by the special direction of heaven. Many an happy occasion had he to exert those sacred talents that were bestow'd upon him: many a successful battle had he fought as captain of the Lord's hosts, and in many a divine song had he recorded the salvations and victories of *Israel*. Thus he determines now to renew his acknowledgments this way; and as he has a fresh occasion, and a *new* subject, so a *new song* is put into his mouth^e, and he will celebrate the late instance of the divine favour to himself and his people, with a *new* composition.

But

^e Psalm xl. 3.

for the Victory at Dettingen. 7

But this phrase is also sometimes used to signify excellency; and this seems evidently included in the signification, when we read of *a new name*^f — *the new Jerusalem*^g — and *new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*^h: and it is so without doubt with respect to the song mentioned in the *revelation*, where it is said that the *beasts and elders fell down before the Lamb, and having every one of them harps, and golden Vials full of odors, they sung A NEW SONG, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof*ⁱ. And again, the apostle says, *he heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were A NEW SONG, before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth*^k. Thus you see the most excellent, the most raised, and extraordinary actions of praise are in this manner described. And thus the psalmist, in our text, seems to intend, that as the subject exceeded many salvations which he had celebrated before, so he wou'd bring a heart warm'd with superior gratitude, with such gratitude if possible, as never yet appear'd before the throne; he wou'd express his thanksgivings in such exalted strains as were never sung before. And then,

2. *David*

^f Rev. ii. 17.

^g Chap. iii. 12.

^h 2 Pet. iii. 13.

ⁱ Rev. v. 8, 9.

^k Chap. xiv. 2, 3.

2. *David* plainly intimates that this praise shou'd not be confined to his private retirements, where no doubt he was determin'd to pour out the grateful tribute of his own heart; nor only be offer'd in his family and court, or at the head of his victorious army; but he wou'd go up to the sanctuary of the Lord, and, with the tribes of *Israel*, give national thanks to heaven, for national salvations; for he mentions here the *psaltery*, and the *instrument of ten strings*, to which he wou'd tune his songs on this great occasion; instruments of musick, which, tho' we can't at this distance of time exactly describe, yet were such as we know were devoted to the service of the tabernacle. So that we may, I think, presume that *David* resolved to go up to the house of God, to call the priests and levites to their altars, and the sons of *Asaph*, and *Heman*, and *Jeduthun*, who were *instructed in the songs of the Lord*¹, to offer up this *new song*, with all the advantages of the musick of that dispensation. Moreover,

3. He adds, with these instruments *will I sing praises*, in the plural number. "I will not only," as if he had said, "offer up a general acknowledgment of the divine favour, and a public thanksgiving for a public blessing, but, on so extraordinary an occasion as this, I will multiply my praises. I will be particular in recording the disadvantages which, thro' the goodness of God, we overcame, the seasonableness of the divine interposition for
our

¹ 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 7.

for the Victory at Dettingen. 9

" our deliverance, and all the remarkable cir-
" cumstances of our salvation, and the victory
" we have obtained. Nor will I only be thus
" particular, but I will praise the great Saviour
" of *Israel* with all my powers, with my
" heart as well as lips, with the most exalted
" strains of divine poetry, and with the most
" harmonious notes of sacred musick, with my
" harp and with my voice. Nor will I only
" command the aid of all the various orders of
" the priests and levites, and those whose con-
" stant employment it is to attend the public
" services of religion; nor be satisfied with the
" assistance of my princes and captains, and
" the great men of my court and camp; but
" all the tribes of *Israel* shall join in the chorus
" of my *song*. And this shall not be the service
" only of a day, but we will repeat the remem-
" brance of our salvation, and our acknow-
" ledgments of the divine favour, and never
" forget the loving-kindness of the Lord." And
then,

4. You see who is the only object of *David's*
religious honours—the *living* and the *true*
GOD, the great GOD of ISRAEL, and his
OWN GOD. *I will sing a new song* UNTO
THEE, O GOD, *unto thee will I sing praises.*
The Gods of the heathen David well knew were
Idols^m, *that have eyes, but they cannot see;*
*ears, but they cannot hear; hands*ⁿ, *but they*
cannot deliver, either themselves, or those that

C

trust

^m 1 Chron. xvi. 26.

ⁿ Psalm cxv. 5—8.

trust in them ; and therefore, how fashionable soever their vain and pompous worship was among the nations, they shou'd have no share in his services. And tho' he knew how to shew a proper regard to those officers and soldiers who behaved well in the fight ; and accordingly we find the names and characters, especially of some of those who were most eminent in the service of this warlike prince, convey'd down to posterity, in the sacred chronicles of those times, with great marks of honour °, and he failed not suitably to reward their courage and fidelity ; yet they shou'd have no share in the tribute of praise that was due to the God of heaven. Tho' he had perhaps the bravest army in the world, and his troops were the best disciplin'd and appointed, yet by much experience he knew, that the *race was not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong* P ; and, as he observes in this context, that the greatest of men are but *vanity*, and their days, as well as their abilities, but *as a shadow that passeth away* 1 : therefore, while some placed their confidence in man, and others trusted *in chariots and in horses*, David's dependance was on the great and eternal J E H O V A H. He had presided over his councils, and succeeded his arms, and therefore he was resolved he shou'd have all the glory of his salvations and conquests. He wou'd not give it to others, nor take it to himself. He had indeed a great measure of courage, and military skill,

° 1 Chron. xi.

P Eccles. ix. 11.

1 Verse 4.

for the Victory at Dettingen. II

skill; and victory, no doubt, was often, under God, in a great measure owing to his presence in the field; God himself also owns him as the *man after his own heart*^r; but notwithstanding all this, *David* did not dare to ascribe salvation to his own *sword* or *bow*, to the wisdom of his councils, or to the power of his *arms*^s, nor to receive the favour of heaven as a debt due to any merit of his own. But *to the Lord* he wou'd *sing praises*, and *David's* God shou'd have the glory of all his successes, as it was his just due, to whom *belongs salvation*^t and *victory*^u, the *Lord of hosts*, who was to him *for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, and for a spirit of judgment*, when he sat in judgment, and *for strength*, when he turned the battle to the gate^w. Thus, upon this solemn occasion, *David* resolves to celebrate the glories of that Being, who sits in the heavens, and holds the reins of government in his own hand, whose wisdom search'd the most secret counsels of his enemies, furnish'd him with skill to circumvent their devices, and *taught his hands to war, and his fingers to fight*; whose spirit dissipated the courage of his enemies, and inspired him and his troops with resolution and valour; whose *holy arm* got him the victory, who *made known his salvation, and openly shewed his righteousness in the sight of the heathen*^x; whose truth fulfill'd every promise to *David*; and, in

C 2

one

^r 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

^s Psal. xlv. 3, 6.

^t Psal. iii. 8.

^u 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

^w Isa. xxviii. 5, 6.

^x Psal. xcvi. 1, 2.

one word, who *is good, and his mercy*, notwithstanding all the sinfulness of his people, *endureth for ever* &c. But I proceed,

II. To consider more particularly the argument of *David's* praise; which is founded, *first*, on a more general observation — *It is God that giveth salvation unto kings*: and, *secondly*, on the experience he himself had of personal deliverance — *Who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.*

I. *It is he that giveth salvation unto kings.* A change is used in this passage from the second person to the third, which we find also in other places, particularly in *Psal. lxxv. 5, 6.* and is an elegancy in the *Hebrew* language, which doth not fully appear in ours. I must also observe, that the word here translated *salvation*, signifies also *victory*, and so we find it rendered in the margin of our bibles, in this place. So that the highest order of men, kings themselves, and the most powerful among kings, with all their counsellors, their riches and their forces, with all their own armies, and all the alliances they can form with other princes and nations, are unable to deliver either themselves or their people, in the day of danger; 'tis God only *that giveth salvation to kings*: and when their enemies fly before them, or fall in the day of battle, it is he to whom the glory of the victory belongs. Nor doth this great and important truth only

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only stand thus clearly and fully asserted by *David*, but must be acknowledged by all who own the existence of a God, and believe in the superintendency of his providence over human affairs; and they must level themselves with *the brutes that perish* or rather sink below them, who deny either. For if it be impossible for any regularity to be preserved in the system of the universe, or indeed that any great event should be brought about, without the concurrence of multitudes of those of lesser moment in themselves, surely every one must allow that those of the greatest importance are under the special influence of Heaven. And if reason as well as scripture may convince us, that all the *hairs of our heads are number'd*, and that there is *not a sparrow falls to the ground without our father's*^z, certainly we must conclude, that, when nations contend in the field, and *kings go forth to battle*, the great Arbiter of heaven and earth will on such occasions preside, and the Lord of hosts will hold the scale of victory in his own hand. Nor does the sacred history of the kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, in their contentions with other states and princes, as well as with one another, only furnish us with a series of undeniable evidence of the wise and watchful government of providence all along; but indeed universal history testifies the same thing, and that of our own nation, in so particular a manner, that he who is not I think wilfully blind, tho' *he runs may read it*. Tho' the
sons

^z Matth. x. 29, 30.

sons of men be ever so great, they must still remember that *God is above 'em. He putteth down one prince, and he setteth up another*^a, and he doth whatever he pleases among all the hosts of heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth. But,

2. *David* adds the experience he himself had of a very special salvation——*It is he that delivereth his servant David from the hurtful sword.*

And here you see that, as the great apostle of the Gentiles delights to stile himself the *servant of the Lord Jesus Christ*, so *David*, great as he was, valued himself chiefly on this character. He was indeed high in the esteem of men, anointed by the divine direction, and seated in a very exalted throne by the providence of God, and he knew very well how to maintain the dignity of the royal character he bore; but yet, when he approaches the King of kings, he bows himself at his sacred footstool, lays all his worldly grandeur in the dust, and declares it to be his highest ambition to be esteemed the *servant* of the Lord. All princes 'tis true may in some sense be called so, as they are instruments in God's hand to execute his pleasure, and this is sometimes, in a providential way, brought about by the worst of men. But *David* means more than this: and whoever observes the words closely, will see that there is an humble triumph express'd in them, and that with great beauty and energy. Other princes might glory in the subjection of
the

^a Psalm lxxv. 7.

for the Victory at Dettingen. 15

the nations of this world to their authority, but he counted it his chief honour to be the *servant* of the God of heaven. They might make their power and their pleasure the rules of their government, and the gratification of their own sensual and ambitious minds the only ends of it; while the will and pleasure of God was that which regulated the administration of *David*, and his glory and the good of his people *Israel*, were the principal designs he had in view. And thus also, while he was so highly exalted above the people, he did not forget that he was accountable to the King of kings, as a *servant* to his master. And happy indeed are the few that in such elevated stations, and surrounded with so many snares, can claim this character. Such princes are truly honourable in themselves, and great blessings to mankind, who, by their own trust and confidence in God, by the justice and equity of their government, and the virtue of their examples, recommend the honour and glory of the Divine Majesty, as well as the social obligations men stand in to one another, to the religious regard of their subjects; who instead of being enemies to God and tyrants over men, are the servants of the Lord, and the nursing fathers of their people. Such a prince was *David*, and he had long experience that God had dealt by him in this character, he had enjoyed his peculiar protection, and been often even miraculously *delivered* by the divine providence *from the hurtful sword*.

“ This”,

“ This,” as if he had said, is a special proof
 “ of what was before asserted, that *God giveth*
 “ *salvation unto kings* : for as he raised me by
 “ his own hand, and in a very extraordinary
 “ way, to the throne of *Israel* ; so he has, in
 “ a multitude of most remarkable instances,
 “ engag’d his special providence in my preservation
 “ and defence, and not only deliver’d
 “ me, as the *king of Israel*, but as his own
 “ *servant*, and shewn that no *weapon form’d*
 “ *against* the favourite of heaven can prosper ^{b.}”
 The *sword* of the champion of the *Philistines*,
 which was wrested from him by miraculous providence,
 and put into the hands of *David*, and with which he sever’d
 that blasphemer’s head from his body, was a noble evidence
 of this ; and so were the cruel *swords* of *Saul*, and of
Abshalom, and those of innumerable foreign and domestick
 enemies, which had been often drawn for the destruction
 of *David*, but thro’ the interposition of heaven, that
 destruction was prevented, and he continued to a good
 old age, as a living witness of the special protection and
 favour of divine providence, and for the great advantage
 of his country, and of the church of God. And he thus
 piously and justly imputes his wonderful deliverance from
 so many deaths and dangers, not to accident and chance,
 the watchfulness and strength of his guards, or to his
 own wisdom, vigilance, and courage ; but to God only,
 who was his *fortress* and his *high tower*, his *deliverer*, and his
shield,

^a *Isa. liv. 17.*

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shield^c, and who, with his own hand, cover'd his head in the day of battle^d. Which leads me,

III. To consider *David's* prayer, on this occasion, for future preservation and success. *Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity; and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*

Thus, as he imputes his deliverance in times past to the special providence of God; so in the view of future dangers he looks to the same refuge: and the arguments on which he founds his plea, are taken from the extreme danger to which he was expos'd, by the number and power of his enemies, and from their character and behaviour.

The former of these he describes in the context, by *great waters^e*. Their numbers were very great, and extended like the bounds of the ocean, and their fury was like its rage in a tempest. The waves came rolling on, and threatened nothing less than to bear down all before them, and to swallow up *David*, and his army, and the nation that he govern'd too, in ruin and destruction. He applies himself therefore to that God, whose salvation he had experienc'd in times past, even when *deep called unto deep, at the noise of more dangerous water-spouts* than these, and *when waves and billows* of a more terrible kind had gone over him. Then did the

D

Lord

^c Psal. cxliv. 2.

^d cxl. 7.

^e Ver. 8.

Lord command his loving-kindness in the day time, and in the night his song was with David^f. Therefore, in the exercise of great wisdom and faith, he applies to him who gave to the sea his decree, that the waters shou'd not pass his commandment^g, who saith to the proud waves, *Hitherto shall ye come, and no further*^h; who stayeth the raging of the sea, and the madness of the people. The number and power of *David's* enemies must make them very formidable in his view, and render any future encounter with them very threatening: but these cou'd be no objections to his success, if the Lord would engage on his side, with whom *there is no restraint*; who can save by few, as well as by manyⁱ; who can, whenever he pleases, make one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight^k; and who has frequently chosen such occasions, to make his mighty power known in the earth.

But then we have the character of his enemies. And,

1. They were *strange children*.

By which, first of all, foreigners may be understood, the descendants of the *Gentiles*, as they stand opposed to the children of *Israel*. So we read in the book of *Nehemiah*, that *the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers*, or, as it is in the *Hebrew*, from all *strange children*^l. The nation of the *Jews* were of one family

^f Psal. xlii. 7, 8.

^g Prov. viii. 29.

^h Job xxxviii. 12.

ⁱ 1 Sam. xiv. 6.

^k Deut. xxxii. 30.

^l Chap. ix. 2.

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family and blood, their common father was the friend of God, and their worship and manner of living separated them from the rest of the world, so that all other nations were esteemed as *strangers* to them: and when any of them were at war with *Israel*, they were justly esteemed more so. Such, 'tis likely, were these, *Gentiles*, the *children of the stranger*^m, the descendants of the ancient enemies of *Israel*, and who maintained the same disposition towards them, as their fathers did. Or,

Secondly, Some think by *strange children*, we are to understand, factious and rebellious subjects at home. For such, you know, was *David* distress'd with, who had degenerated from the principles of their ancestors, and had engaged in an unnatural opposition to the good of their country, as well as the allegiance due to their prince. He had been severely affected, not only by the base and ungrateful revolt of many of his subjects, to whom he had been a common father, but, what was still more dreadfully shocking, the rebellion of his own beloved son *Abjalom*. But,

Thirdly, Whether he has regard here, to foreign or domestick enemies, or both, it seems natural to conclude, that he intends those who were not only *strangers* and opposite to the good of those kingdoms he govern'd, and to the honour of that crown he wore; but to the worship of the living and the true God, whom he served, who had so graciously approved him-

D 2

self

^m Hosea v. 7.

self to be the God of *Israel*, and whose protection he was now imploring. Thus, this character is often in scripture join'd with that of the *uncircumcised*ⁿ, and the *Idolater*^o. And from hence it is that wicked and profane persons are frequently described by these terms^p. So the *Ziphites*, tho' *Israelites* by birth, have this character given them by *David*, on account of their want of piety and humanity: *Strangers*, says he, *are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul; they have not set God before them. Selah*^q. And 'tis in this light, that the apostle *Paul* represents the case of the *Ephesians* before their conversion, not only on account of their birth among the *Gentiles*, but the ignorance and wickedness in which they were plunged, being *without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*^r. But,

2. He goes on, describing them as a people, whose *mouth spoke vanity*. As they were an idolatrous and profane generation, so they employ'd their lips in the worship of those idols, which are frequently in the scriptures most justly called *vanities*^s. Or else this phrase may be design'd, to express that boasting spirit which *David's* enemies had often discover'd. For so it was, that the proud champion of the *Philistines*

ⁿ Ezek. xlv. 7.
with Rev. xxi. 27.

^o Jer. xviii. 15.

^o Chap. xiv. 7.

^q Psal. liv. 3.

Acts xiv. 15.

^p Joel iii. 17. comp.

^r Eph. ii. 12.

for the Victory at Dettingen. 21

times treated him; when with an haughty air he threw his eyes around, and cast down a contemptuous look on *David*, when *he* *curst* him by his Gods, and said, *come to me and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field*^t. When he not only *defied* *David*, but with a mouth of insolence and vanity, dared to *defy* the God of *Israel*^u. So *Saul*, in his implacable malice against this servant of the Lord, not only *hunted* him as a partridge on the mountains^w, but vowed that he should *surely die*^x. And thus *Shimei* *curst* *David*, cast stones at him, and treated him with the most opprobrious language, when under such circumstances of distress, as one wou'd think shou'd have melted the most implacable temper into compassion^y. And such was the behaviour of the common enemies of God and of his people at that time, they used *high swelling words of vanity and blasphemy*, they boasted of their own strength, they threatned *David* and his people sore, so that he complains that his *soul* was *among lions*, that the *tongues* of his enemies *were set on fire*, that their *teeth* were *spears and arrows*, and *their tongues* were *sharp swords*^z: They *travailed with iniquity, conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood*^a; *with lying lips that spoke grievous things proudly, and contemptuously*^b. They said *we will pursue, we will overtake, we will divide the spoil*: and as the

^t 1 Sam. xvii. 42, 43.

^x Chap. xx. 31.

^a Psal. vii. 14.

^u Verse 45.

^y 2 Sam. xvi.

^b Psal. xxxi. 18.

^w 1 Sam. xxvi. 20.

^z Psal. lvii. 4.

the king of *Assyria*, afterwards, *on whom dost thou trust*, *vain is the strength of thy alliances?* or *who is the Lord himself* that he should deliver thee out of our hand^c? In this manner boasted *David's* enemies, and the enemies of *Israel*, but *wherein they dealt proudly*, *God was above them*^d.

To this I might add, that *Vanity* in scripture often signifies *falshood*. So *David* expostulates, with God's enemies and his own; *O ye sons of men, how long will ye love vanity; and seek after leasing*^e? And so *Agur* prays, *Remove far from me vanity and lies*^f, &c. But,

3. This is more fully expressed in the last part of their character, and that is, that *their right hand was a right hand of falshood*.

By which some think the strength of their arms, and fortifications, or the skill and courage of their princes, their officers and armies, and those of their confederates is intended; and others interpret it of the Gods in whom they trusted. 'Tis true also, that *kissing of the right hand* was a mode of worship among the heathens^g. But what seems to me to be the most natural sense in this place, is, either an allusion to the ancient custom of striking peace and friendship, as *Jebu* did with *Jehonadab* the son of *Rechab*, when he said, *If thy heart be right give me thine hand*^h; or rather to that of lifting it up to the most high God, when solemn

^c Isa. xxxvi. and xxxvii.

^d Exod. xviii. 11.

^e Psal.

iv. 3.

^f Prov. xxx. 8.

^g Job xxxi. 27.

^h 2 Kings x. 15.

for the Victory at Dettingen. 23

lemn treaties were bound with oaths. This appears to have been a most ancient, as well as a most significative form of swearing; and in this sense it was that *Abraham* tells the king of *Sodom*, that he had *lift up his hand to the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth*¹. Thus then, the enemies of *David* not only had their lips fill'd with boasting and lying vanities, but they deceived themselves in the confidence they put in their own arm, and the strength and faithfulness of their allies, as well as the salvation they expected from their Gods; and when they propos'd friendship, it was often only a cover for deceit and treachery, and to obtain time and proper opportunity to execute their wicked purposes. His foreign enemies had confirm'd many a treaty with the most solemn oaths, and *lift up their hands* to the most high God on those occasions; but he found that these engagements, sacred as they were in themselves, were not strong enough to bind men of their false and wicked principles; and, as *their mouth spoke vanity, so their right hand was a right hand of falsehood*. But to this must be added, that a perfidiousness still more aggravated and unnatural had been found among some of *David's* own subjects, who tho' they had dwelt under the sunshine of his mild and happy government, and had been protected by his sword and buckler, yet they violated their most sacred oaths of allegiance to his government, endeavour'd artfully to lessen his royal character and influence,

¹ Gen. xiv. 22.

influence, to alienate the hearts of their fellow-subjects from him, and to encourage and strengthen the hands of his enemies, and were even sometimes found in open rebellion against him.

Thus have I endeavour'd to give you what I take to be the natural meaning of these words of *David*; and I persuade myself you have already allowed in your own minds, that they may not be unsuitably applied to the happy occasion of our special addresses to heaven this day. But it is fit I should proceed to improve that application, by a few remarks that may tend to warm our religious gratitude to heaven on this occasion, and encourage our future hopes in the great God of our salvation. And,

Here it will be necessary for me, first of all, to put you in mind, that the *French* nation having long enjoy'd the advantages of peace, and much improved their strength, since the just discipline they received from the victorious arms of the allies, under the command of the great duke of *Marlborough*, have shewn they have not forgot the scheme of universal power, which their late monarch had always in his view. But that court, watchful of every opportunity to make encroachments on its neighbours, and to subject, if possible, all the nations of *Europe* to the same yoke, under which its own subjects have so long groan'd, on the death of the late emperor, in violation of the most solemn engagements, and under the most perfidious pretence

for the Victory at Dettingen. 25

tence of guarding the peace of the empire, fomented jealousies in the courts of many of its princes, and march'd a powerful army into the heart of that country. The *French* schemes were so artfully laid, and so many powerful princes were drawn into the snare; some openly to support their designs, and others to neglect those engagements they were under to assist the house of *Austria*, that the progress they at first made was such, as spread terror in the hearts of all wise and good men, under the apprehension of the dreadful consequences which threatned all *Europe*. Our King very early informed his parliament of the storm he saw approaching; and notwithstanding he was engag'd in a war with *Spain*, to recover the rights of his injur'd people, yet by their assistance he sent such a seasonable supply of money to the queen of *Hungary*, as, with the blessing of God on her arms, greatly contributed to enable her to make such a vigorous stand against her united enemies, as amaz'd all *Europe*. And the successes she soon obtain'd, were such, as will be lasting testimonies of the special favour of heaven to so just a cause. Nor will it ever be forgotten, that the righteous God, the avenger of the wrongs of the oppressed, inspir'd his Majesty with a noble resolution, under all the disadvantages attending a malevolent spirit, fomented by the common disturbers of all *Europe*, among his own subjects, to put himself at the head of his troops, in order to check the pride of *France*, more effectually to support

26 *A Thanksgiving-Sermon*

this injur'd princess, and to preserve the balance of power, which was brought into so much danger. His Majesty no sooner arrives in his camp, but he finds himself in the face of an army much superior to his own, composed chiefly of veteranes, and amongst 'em many of the *French* king's household troops, commanded by an uncommon number of brave and experienced officers, and under the conduct of a very great and able general, furnished with all proper necessaries of war, and with a mighty train of artillery; a formidable line of which was planted on the bank of the river that fronted their camp, and which was narrow, and fordable for the horse in several places. The *French* general having receiv'd advice that a considerable number of *German* troops were coming up to join the king's forces, found means so to stop the provisions, that our army was greatly straitned; and with all these advantages he determines immediately to pass the *Main*, and attack his Majesty before the junction of these forces.

And now, if it be consider'd, that nothing appears to have been wanting either of skill or resolution on the part of the enemy, that they had greatly the advantage in their numbers, in the choice of the ground, of the manner of the attack, and to which I will add, the confidence they always have in the experience and ardour of their *Gens d'armes*, who are justly esteemed some of the finest and bravest troops in the whole world, while at the same time they
were

for the Victory at Dettingen. 27

were not ignorant that the far greater part of our *British* soldiers labour'd under the disadvantage, of having never yet had an opportunity to see an enemy in the field ; let all these things, I say, be consider'd, and then we shall not much wonder, that a nation, so void of the knowledge of God, should make themselves almost sure of victory : and since under all these disadvantages it has issued in our favour, surely every rational observer must own the extraordinary interposition of divine providence in our behalf, and confess, that *truly, he that is our God has, once more, approved himself to be the God of salvation, and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death*^k. Nor could we be excused from the guilt of great ingratitude, if we did not *sing a new song unto the Lord* on this occasion, and humbly acknowledge, *that his right hand, and his holy arm have gotten him the victory*^l.

If at this critical conjuncture, and just at the entrance of our army into the field, and at the appearance of our King at the head of it ; if, I say, for the just reward of our sins, victory had been given to our enemies, what a scene of sad consequences would have immediately presented itself to our view ? If our army had fallen a sacrifice to the rage and pride of *France*, and what to every true *Briton*, and every hearty friend of liberty in *Europe* must be a much more dreadful thought, if the person of his most

E 2

facred

^k Psal. lxxviii. 20.

^l Psal. xcvi. 1.

sacred Majesty had been the prey of his enemies, or his most invaluable life had been lost in the field of battle, who can conceive of the effects of such a catastrophe without horror! But, blessed be that God, *who giveth victory to kings*; he for his own name sake brought salvation, that he might make his mighty power to be known^m. It may be truly said, *the Lord God was with them, and the shout of a king was among them.*

All our accounts agree that the French marshal laid his scheme with extraordinary judgment, and that he passed the river, planted his batteries, and formed his lines with great capacity; but that so experienced a general should so soon quit a situation, with the advantages of a village and a river on the right, mountains on the left, and a morass before him, for ground that was accessible in all his front, was an infatuation that ought to be imputed to the kind and gracious hand of that God, who, to answer his own purposes, often *turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish*ⁿ. The seasonable information the King received of the motion of the enemy, which was conducted with so much secrecy, and in the night, was a remarkable evidence of the watchful care of heaven over him and his allies. Nor can one sufficiently admire the presence of mind with which his Majesty and his general officers were furnish'd, in that prudent and speedy disposition

^m Psal. cvi. 8.

ⁿ Isa. xlv. 25.

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position of the troops, as prevented the great and immediate danger, to which they were at first exposed, by being flank'd by the whole *French* army.

The action itself appears to have been one of the most sharp and resolute, on both sides, that history has produced. And indeed, it is with astonishment and the warmest gratitude, that we ought to reflect on the glorious success of it, considering the prodigious fire of the *French* artillery, which were planted to such advantage, and which our troops were for so many hours obliged to sustain, before they could come to closer fight.

His Majesty had given such early and illustrious proofs of his valour, in the war in *Flanders*; he had charg'd with that resolution at the battle of *Oudenard*, when his horse was shot under him, and colonel *Laskey* fell by his side, that the *French* nation might justly tremble to see him at the head of a *British* and confederate army: And they will perhaps never forget the effects of the attack now made upon him. Whether it be agreeable with the law of arms, or not, I have not skill enough to determine; but this, I think I may venture to say, that it very ill became the high pretensions that nation makes to generosity and politeness, that their field artillery should be chiefly pointed, where his royal person might most reasonably be supposed to be; and indeed from this, as well as the rash attempt of their *black musqueteers*, it seems as if the army had the same direction, as
was

was given by the king of *Syria* to the captains that had the rule over his chariots, *Fight neither with small nor great, but with the king of Israel*^o. But notwithstanding all this, as no dissuasion could draw his Majesty from the hottest part of the action, so we can never enough adore the mercy of God to these nations, who covered his royal head in the day of battle^p; and that he, who giveth salvation and victory to kings, delivered his servant *GEORGE* from the hurtful sword. Nor can we sufficiently admire that skill, resolution, and activity, with which he was inspired on this great occasion; and with which he animated the whole army, when he formed their lines, and directed the batteries of artillery; when he rode thro' the several ranks, and with so admirable an address provoked the ardour of his troops; and when to all this he added his great example, and, with sword in hand, led on the *British* foot, thro' so much blood and fire, to victory.

Nor must we forget the care of heaven over his royal highness the Duke, who fought like the son of such a father; and whose precious life, by the indulgence of the same providence to a sinful nation, was most mercifully preserved; tho' he received a dangerous wound in the engagement; which, as it is an early proof of his courage, and of his concern for the liberties of *Europe*, so, we need not doubt, he will always esteem it as a signal mark of honour.

As

^o 1 Kings xxii. 31.^p Psal. cxl. 7.

for the Victory at Dettingen. 31

As the victory was compleat, so God was pleas'd to crown not only the british forces, but those of our allies with much glory; and it is very wonderful, that considering the inequality of numbers, and the extraordinary fire of the *French* artillery, it should appear, upon a careful computation of the killed and wounded on both sides, together with those of the enemy which were drowned in their flight, that their loss exceeded ours near three to one, and that it fell chiefly upon the flower of their troops.

But further, if we consider the consequences that we may reasonably expect from these first fruits of success, if our sins do not prevent, we may encourage ourselves to hope for much more occasion for thanksgiving. The *French* army, whose generals, not long ago, boasted they would give laws to the queen of *Hungary* from the walls of *Vienna*, is already retir'd, to seek a refuge within the borders of their own country: The emperor has laid down his arms: The brave prince *Charles* is approaching to join his Majesty with an army of 60,000 men: And all *Germany* seems ready to acknowledge the King of great *Britain* to be the messenger of heaven for their deliverance, from the cruelty and rapine of the arms of *France*, and the fetters forg'd for them by that perfidious court, and to put the scale of their several interests into his just and equal hand.

Nor can we esteem it a consequence of less importance, that the bad spirit, which has for a long time been fomented among us in this nation,

tion, by *French* influence, and that has deluded so many of our countrymen into a behaviour towards their governors, very ill becoming the peace and liberty we have enjoy'd, ever since the present illustrious family came to the throne, has, by this action, receiv'd as remarkable a victory at home.

But, before I conclude, I must observe, that, as on this occasion we are with great reason called upon to copy after *David* in his thanksgivings; so we may also very justly join in his petitions, that God would *deliver* us and our allies *from the hand of these strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.* For if a settled hatred to our nation, if a determined enmity to that liberty of conscience, and that pure worship of God which we so happily enjoy, and if the most inhuman treatment of their own brethren for their adherence to the true religion, many of whom have found an asylum amongst us, if these characters will denominate them *strange children*, it of just right belongs to them. And if we may lawfully complain to heaven against a people *whose mouth speaketh vanity*, I believe it will be allowed me that no nation under the sun more righteously deserves this character, than that whose princes have often published it to the world, as a reason sufficient for them to declare war against their neighbours, when they have thought it for their *glory*. Who cover the most wicked and destructive actions under the prophaneness of a *most christian* direction, who
fight

for the Victory at Dettingen. 33

fight under the banners of *lying vanities*, and who, after the great and righteous God has poured the most public contempt on their councils and their arms, have oftentimes had vanity and impiety enough to sing *Te Deum*, as if they were conquerors; and so have blasphemously mock'd heaven, in order to cover their shame upon earth.

And yet further, if it may be said of any people in the whole world, that their *right hand is a right hand of falsehood*, it may be surely said so of that people, the *faith* of whose princes is become a proverb with all mankind; a faith that was most prophanely and barbarously violated, with their *protestant* subjects, at the revocation of the edict of *Nantz*, and has been scarce kept with any nation ever since. A nation whose prime ministers, to the great honour of the catholick cause, have been for a considerable time a succession of churchmen, who have scarce ever negotiated a treaty, but with a design to break it, upon the first opportunity that it might appear to be for the advantage of their prince.

I need only mention the occasion of the present war. 'Tis well known that the very country into which the *French* are retiring from the terror of his Majesty's arms, and those of his allies, was ceded to them by a treaty, in which they engag'd to guaranty the *pragmatick sanction*: and it is as certain, that they have been so far from paying any regard to those public and solemn engagements, that the immense
F quantity

quantity of blood and treasure which they have exhausted during this war, has been with a most inhuman view, to strip the queen of *Hungary* of her hereditary dominions, in order to pave the way for an increase of their own power. Their falshood to *Prussia*, and the ravages they have made in *Bavaria* itself, the country of that unhappy prince, for whose service they pretended at first to enter into the empire, are still more flagrant instances, if possible, of their perfidy, and of the caution all princes for the future ought to use how they trust 'em. Thus it may be well said, their *right hand is a right hand of falshood*. While, on the other side, it is our great joy and honour, and crowns the triumphs of this day, that the cause of our King is just and good, and that he is as famous all over the world for his integrity, as he is for his valour, and has in this glorious instance of both, exceeded all the princes in the world. This is also of God, and may our souls be filled with gratitude.

And now what remains, but that we humbly improve this season, in the most religious thanksgivings, which our Sovereign, after the pattern of *David*, having offer'd up at the head of his troops, has commanded us also to acknowledge here at home. May our joy be rational and religious, and our gratitude to heaven be manifested, by maintaining a continual war with our own corruptions. May we never cease to pray for the safety and true glory of our King, and for every divine blessing on his
sacred

for the Victory at Dettingen. 35

sacred person, and on all his royal posterity. May we *study the things that make for the public peace* and welfare, and if there be any *strange children* left among us, who have forgotten their vows in the days of their distress, and when *French* counsels prevailed in this nation, may God open their eyes, and humble them for their great sin and folly. I hope none such are to be found among the *protestant dissenters*; and I am glad I have this opportunity to say, that it has administer'd no small pleasure to a large assembly of them in this city, to reflect that they, with the assistance of several of their ministers, were warmly wrestling with heaven for the salvation we now celebrate, at the very hour when the battle began. May that God who has done these great things for us, while other nations are feeling the dreadful effects of his vengeance by the desolations of pestilence, as well as war, lead us all to repentance, forgive our national sins, and continue his favour to us, that we may have many occasions of this kind, to *enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.*

F I N I S.

2

For the History of the Nation

...and on all his royal posterity. May
we think the things that we have
seen and heard, and that we have
seen and heard, who have seen them
rows in the days of their distress, and when
I have counted the number of the nation, may
God open their eyes, and humble them for their
iniquity, and for the blood of the saints.

I have seen the great distress of the nation, and I
am glad I have this opportunity to say, that it
has been a great blessing to the nation, and to the
world, that I have been able to do this.

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...and we may have many more of this kind, to
show the great love of the Lord to his people, and
the great love of the people to their Lord.

2 1 1 1 1

7.